

News Release



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MDA confirms emerald ash borer find in Olmsted County

Olmsted County to become the fifth county in Minnesota under quarantine for EAB

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) today confirmed an emerald ash borer (EAB) infestation in Olmsted County near the interchange of Interstate 90 and U.S. Highway 63. The infested trees are approximately 45 miles away from the nearest EAB find in Winona County.

Because of this find, Olmsted County will join Hennepin, Houston, Ramsey and Winona counties in a state and federal quarantine. The quarantine is in place to help prevent EAB from spreading outside a known infested area into new areas. It is designed to limit the movement of any items that may be infested with EAB, including ash trees and ash tree limbs, as well as all hardwood firewood.

“While EAB can move on its own, we suspect this new infestation was caused inadvertently through human assistance,” said MDA Entomologist Mark Abrahamson. “This is why it’s so critical that people be aware of and follow the quarantine. We will greatly reduce the risk of EAB spreading around the state if people stop moving firewood and other ash materials.”

Minnesota is highly susceptible to the destruction caused by EAB. The state has approximately one billion ash trees, the most of any state in the nation. EAB was first discovered in Minnesota in 2009. The last time a county was added to the quarantine was in 2011 when an infestation was discovered in Great River Bluffs State Park in Winona County.

“Because citizens, and local, state, and federal partners have done a good job in slowing the spread of emerald ash borer in Minnesota, the state has seen an infestation rate that’s approximately four times slower than other states with EAB,” said Geir Friisoe, Director of MDA’s Plant Protection Division. “However, this latest find proves that we still need the public’s help in battling this insect.”

Emerald ash borer larvae kill ash trees by tunneling into the wood and feeding on the tree’s nutrients. Since its accidental introduction into North America, EAB has killed tens of millions of ash trees in 24 states.

The metallic-green adult emerald ash borer beetles are a half-inch long, and are active from May to September. Infestation signs include one-eighth inch, D-shaped exit holes in ash tree bark and winding tunnels under the bark.

The biggest risk of spreading EAB comes from people unknowingly moving firewood or other ash products harboring larvae. There are three easy steps Minnesotans can take to keep EAB from spreading:

- **Don’t transport firewood.** Buy firewood locally from approved vendors, and burn it where you buy it;
- **Be aware of the quarantine restrictions.** If you live in a quarantined county, be aware of the restrictions on movement of products such as ash trees, wood chips, and firewood. Details can be found online at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/en/plants/pestmanagement/eab/regulatoryinfo.aspx>; and,
- **Watch your ash trees for infestation.** If you think your ash tree is infested, go to www.mda.state.mn.us and use the “Do I Have Emerald Ash Borer?” checklist or contact MDA’s Arrest the Pest Hotline by calling 888-545-6684 or emailing Arrest.The.Pest@state.mn.us to report concerns.

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In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-201-6000.

TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 1-800-627-3529.

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